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EPA PICKS CLEANUP PLAN FOR NORTH BRONSON SUPERFUND SITE

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 5 and Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) have recently chosen a plan to clean up a portion of the North Bronson Industrial Area Superfund site, Bronson, Branch County, MI.

The plan, outlined in a document called a Record of Decision, deals with two sets of sludge lagoons in the northeast and northwest sections of the site (known as the eastern and western lagoons), ground-water contamination from the lagoons, and County Drain #30--which runs along the north border of the 200-acre site.

A separate, supplementary cleanup plan will be developed by 1999 to take care of secondary (non-lagoon) sources of ground-water contamination within the rest of the site. The secondary sources are related to releases from an industrial sewer that was used to convey waste to the sludge lagoons.

EPA's cleanup plan for the lagoons, groundwater, and County Drain #30 includes: excavation of sludge and contaminated soil in or near the eastern lagoons; dredging of contaminated sediment from County Drain #30; and consolidation of the materials from the eastern lagoons and County Drain #30 in the western lagoons--which will then be covered with an EPA-approved soil cap.

In addition, contaminated ground water from both lagoon areas will be filtered through a constructed wetland for cleansing. The plan also includes ongoing surface- and ground-water

monitoring, as well as enforceable restrictions on future land and ground-water use at the site (other than industrial uses).

Next, EPA and the parties will negotiate an agreement under which the responsible parties will design and construct the cleanup plan. Such an agreement is anticipated by late 1998.

Metal plating wastes from local companies were discharged to the western lagoons from 1939 to 1949--when they became overloaded and leaks were first reported. The eastern lagoons were constructed in 1949. The western lagoons continued to be used until 1980, and the eastern lagoons until 1981. The site is bordered to the east by Lincoln St., to the south by Filmore and Union Sts., to the West by Burr Oak St., and County Drain #30 to the North.

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